

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 200919Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9250
USDOC WASHDC
INFO USLO PEKING
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 05156

USDOC FOR MARAD AND BEWT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, EEWT, EWWT, ENRG, UR
SUBJECT: VISIT TO NAKHODKA/PORT VOSTOCHNY AND
KHABAROVSK

SUMMARY: EMBASSY E/C COUNSELOR AND COMATT VISITED
NAKHODKA AND WRANGEL BAY OFF PORT VOSTOCHNY, MARCH 13-15,
IN SOVIET MARITIME PROVINCE AND KHABAROVSK,
MARCH 16-17. TRIP INCLUDED TRAIN RIDES KHABAROVSK/
NAKHODKA AND RETURN. OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS
INCLUDING BIOGRAPHIC, FROM TRIP WILL BE REPORTED IN SUBJECT
ORIENTED AIRGRAMS. THIS MESSAGE CONVEYS MAIN CONCLUSIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF PORT VOSTOCHNIY IS PROCEEDING
BEHIND SCHEDULE, ACCORDING TO JAPANESE CONSUL GENERAL IN
NAKHODKA, BECAUSE OF (A) LABOR SHORTAGE, (B) POOR EQUIP-
MENT, (C) LOW STATE OF TECHNOLOGY AND (D) CONSTRUCTION
MATERIAL SHORTAGES. INCOMPETENT USE OF TECHNOLOGY (E.G.
AN AMERICAN COMPUTER) WAS ALSO NOTED. DEVELOPMENT OF
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VOSTOCHNIY DEPENDS ON PACE OF BAIKAL-AMUR-MAINLINE RAIL-
ROAD (BAM) AND, ACCORDING TO GENERAL MANAGER OF MERCHANT
PORT OF NAKHODKA, WOULD BE SENSELESS WITHOUT IT. CAPTAIN
OF PORT OF VOSTOCHNIY SAID DEVELOPMENT WILL DEPEND ON
INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CONTRIBUTION BY OTHERS (JAPANESE
HAVE ALREADY INVESTED \$1.160 BILLION AND WILL HAVE OWN
CONTAINER FACILITIES.) HE TERMED ICE MAIN PROBLEM

(NAKHODKA GULF HAS NO ICEBREAKERS) AND MAY PRECLUDE CONSTRUCTION OF BREAKWATER. ACCESS TO VOSTOCHNIY BY ROAD FROM NAKHODKA TAKES ONE HOUR, BY MOTOR LAUNCH 75 MINUTES.

2. NAKHODKA PORT SUFFERS FROM SHORTAGE OF SOME 250-300 STEVEDORES (1550 EMPLOYED). AVERAGE CONTAINER TRANSSHIPMENT TIME SAID TO BE 2-3 DAYS, WITH DELAYS (UP TO 7 DAYS) ADMITTED DUE TO PRESENT INCAPACITY OF RAILROADS. GENERAL MANAGER OF PORT ALSO MENTIONED NEED FOR CENTRAL RAIL STATION (THERE ARE PRESENTLY FOUR PORTS AND SEVEN RAILROAD STATIONS IN NAKHODKA/VOSTOCHNIY AREA). MUCH UNFINISHED CONSTRUCTION WAS NOTED.

3. AMERICAN MANAGER OF US-USSR MARINE RESOURCES CO., IN NAKHODKA, IS RESIDING IN APARTMENT OF SOME 40-50 SQUARE METERS. HIS MORALE REMAINS GOOD, AND HE IS EVEN CONTEMPLATING EXTENDING ANOTHER YEAR. HIS TRAVEL REMAINS SEVERELY RESTRICTED, HOWEVER, IN CONTRAST TO FREEDOM ENJOYED BY SOVIET COUNTERPART IN BELLINGHAM. HE SAID THAT COMPANY'S TOTAL BUSINESS AT PRESENT IS SALE OF SOVIET-ORIGIN FISH TO BE PROCESSED IN SOUTH KOREA.

4. COMMERCIAL EXHIBITION FACILITIES IN NAKHODKA AREA ARE EXTREMELY LIMITED AND WERE NOT SHOWN TO EMBASSY OFFICERS DESPITE THEIR REQUEST.
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5. VICE REPRESENTATIVE OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE IN FAR EAST SAID THAT YAKUTIA NATURAL GAS PIPELINE, IF CONSTRUCTED, WOULD PROBABLY RUN TO OL'GA BAY, 200 KILOMETERS NORTH OF NAKHODKA (MOSCOW A-56), ALTHOUGH MAGADAN AND NAKHODKA REMAIN POSSIBILITIES.

6. ONCE VOSTOCHNIY IS COMPLETED, IT WILL HANDLE ALL CONTAINER TRADE (AT PRESENT IT HANDLES OUTBOUND CARGO) EXCEPT CABOTAGE FROM NAKHODKA TO MAGADAN (THIS PRESUPPOSES THAT CONTAINER PORT FACILITIES ARE BEING DEVELOPED IN MAGADAN AND MAY POSSIBLY RELATE TO 1977 ECONOMIST OF LONDON REPORT OF RAILROAD BEING BUILT FROM THERE TO BODEBO BY CONVICT LABOR).

7. SOVIETS USE NORTH KOREAN PORT OF NAJIN FOR SHIPMENT OF CEMENT, FERROUS METALS AND SCRAP.

8. SOVIET ARMY WAS OBSERVED HELPING TO LAY NEW LINE OF TRACK ALONG NAKHODKA-KHABAROVSK RAILROAD NEAR ANISOVKA. HOWEVER, LITTLE SOVIET MILITARY MOVEMENT ALONG BORDER WAS NOTED. BRIDGES WERE BEING CONSTRUCTED NEAR ARTEM.

9. SEVERE MEAT SHORTAGES WERE REPORTED FOR BOTH NAKHODKA AND KHABAROVSK. THERE WAS MEAT IN TOURIST HOTELS AND TOURIST TRAIN, BUT JAPANESE CONSUL GENERAL REPORTED STORES HAD MEAT ONLY THREE TIMES IN 1977 AND NONE IN 1978. DROUGHT IN AREA HAS CAUSED WATER LEVEL TO FALL. VLADIVOSTOK REPORTEDLY HAS HAD EXTREMELY SEVERE WATER SHORTAGE SINCE LAST SUMMER, WITH BUCKETS USED TO FLUSH TOILETS, EVEN ON LOWER FLOORS OF APARTMENT BUILDINGS. MINERAL WATER WAS IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY AS FAR NORTH AS KHABAROVSK, PRESUMABLY TO SUPPLY VLADIVOSTOK. HEAVY AND UNCONTROLLABLE FOREST FIRES WERE REPORTED AROUND KHABAROVSK IN 1976 AND

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1977.

10. IN CONTRAST TO NAKHODKA, WHERE A NUMBER OF MEETINGS WERE HELD, AND DESPITE OUR WRITTEN REQUESTS TO MFA AND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, AUTHORITIES IN KHABAROVSK REFUSED TO SEE EMBASSY OFFICERS, AND KGB SUBJECTED THEM TO CRUDE AND INTENSIVE SURVEILLANCE AT ALL TIMES. RANDOM CONTACTS WITH CIVIL POPULATION TENDED TO CONFIRM THAT IT IS EASILY MANIPULATED BY PROPAGANDA, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO "NEUTRON BOMB" ISSUE. "LABOR SHORTAGE" ALSO REPORTED IN KHABAROVSK, WITH TROOPS INSTALLING PUBLIC UTILITIES, BUT DISGUISED UNEMPLOYMENT SEEMED TO ABOUND. TOON

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